

historia pre-
dicaba en el
siglo II, ¿por
qué no hoy?

God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want. How much more glorious

Miguel
y
Ranchero

Function and Dysfunction: A Case Study of Mexican American Methodist

Paul Barton

San Juan
flor y
olivos

much wiser to spend money on living beings, than on jewels and gold! How much more useful to acquire decorous friends, than lifeless ornaments! Who have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favours has? It remains for us, therefore, to do away with this allegation: Who, then, will have the more sumptuous things, if all select the simpler? Men, I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently.

El marco histórico-social para entender el pentecostalismo en Puerto Rico

Rubén Pérez Torres

y las
mujeres
tambien

restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, bidding a long farewell to these superfluities.

In fine, they must accordingly utterly cast off ornaments as girls' gewgaws, rejecting a biblically self-centred. For they ought to be adorned within, and show the inner woman beautiful. For in the soul alone are beauty and deformity shown. Wherefore also a beautiful and good man is really beautiful and good. And it is laid down as a dogma, that only the beautiful is good. And excellence alone appears through the beautiful body, and blossoms out in the flesh, exhibiting the amiable comeliness of self-control, whenever the character like a beam of light gleams in the form. For the beauty of each plant and animal consists in its individual excellence. And the excellence of man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness. The beautiful man is, then, he who is just, temperate, and in a word, good, not he who is rich. But now even the soldiers wish to be decked with gold, not having read that poetical saying:

Reseñas bibliográficas

Allan Figueroa Deck

!?

Pablo A. Jiménez

Reflexiones teológicas desde

el

"With childish folly to the war he came,
Laden with store of gold."¹

¿el Antiguo?

But the love of ornament, which is far from caring for virtue, but claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled.

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 872.

margen
hispano

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Function and Dysfunction: A Case Study of Mexican American Methodists

Paul Barton

Whenever different cultures encounter each other and coexist, such coexistence precipitates changes in each culture, and, possibly, the emergence of a new culture. Such is the case with the Mexican American culture, which is different from both the Mexican and the American (U.S.) cultures while containing elements of both; it is a kind of synthesis of the two cultures from which it arose. The members who comprise the Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church can also be considered a unique culture in that they are the result of the mixture of Anglo Protestantism in the United States with the Mexican American culture of the Southwest. Its members negotiate a path between two separate frames of reference--their Mexican-based culture and their Anglo-based Methodist religious affiliation. Located throughout Texas and eastern New Mexico, it is the only conference of the United Methodist Church whose members consist almost exclusively of Hispanics and where Spanish is the official language of the conference.

This paper will examine the function and dysfunction of religion in the encounter between different, and sometimes competing cultures, specifically the Anglo-American culture and the Mexican culture of the Southwest.¹ Specifically, this paper will examine the extent to which Anglo Protestantism, in the form of Methodism, has served as 1) an instrument of acculturation for Mexican American Methodists into mainstream American society, 2) a catalyst for social and cultural change, and 3) a vehicle for maintaining their Mexican heritage, their Protestant tradition notwithstanding. An examination of the process of social change that has occurred in the Methodist-related Rio Grande Conference, thus, serves as a case study for the effects of Anglo Protestantism upon Mexican Americans in Texas and New Mexico.

It will be necessary to determine the type of religion that the Anglo missionaries brought to the Mexican American population. By elucidating the characteristics of Methodism transmitted initially by Anglo missionaries in the 1800's and early 1900's, we will be able to appreciate the radical difference between the Anglo Protestant faith of the Mexican Americans and the Mexican Catholic faith of their Mexican American neighbors. The most effective way of characterizing the Methodist faith received by Mexican Americans is by developing

1 Robert K. Merton states that "*functions* are those observed consequences which make for adaptation or adjustment of a given system; and *dysfunctions*, those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system." *Social Theory and Social Structure: Toward the Codification of Theory and Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), 105.

a taxonomy of its sacred symbols and the meanings that they conveyed. Following this, we will examine certain values within Methodism that contributed to the socialization of the Mexican American Methodists into the Methodist (and later, United Methodist) Church and mainstream society.

This paper will also pursue the two foci that are constitutive of the term, "Mexican American Methodist." The first focus examines the changes that occurred in the identity of those Mexican Americans who entered into the Methodist church. Religion will thus be studied as a vehicle for social change, in this case, separation from one culture and limited integration into the dominant social system. This focus observes the adoption of certain aspects of Anglo religion, worship, and organization. The second focus examines the extent to which Mexican American Methodists maintained their Mexican American culture after they were divorced from their surrounding Catholic Mexican American culture. It also examines the conference members' hesitation to integrate fully within the Anglo-dominated Methodist Church.

The Function of Anglo-Dominated Methodism

The type of religion brought by Anglo missionaries to the Mexican American in the Southwest was one that defined itself in opposition to the Catholic religion. The Protestant message was as much anti-Catholic as it was pro-evangelical. Catholics were characterized as unchristian, indeed, idolaters, because they "worshipped" the saints. Preaching for conversion entailed preaching against the supposedly fallacious beliefs and practices of Catholicism. Catholicism, as portrayed by Methodism, was a corrupt, misguided, and failed religion.

The Protestant religion which the Anglo missionaries transmitted to the Mexican American people in Texas and New Mexico from the late 1800's frequently cited biblical scripture as proof of its veracity. Following their spiritual mentors, Mexican American converts would often cite scripture to demonstrate the rightness of their beliefs and practices. For example, in the May 1950, edition of *El Heraldo Cristiano*, the official monthly journal of the conference, the editor wrote an editorial against the Catholic Church's pronouncement of the discovery of the remains of the apostle Peter in a tomb in Rome. The editor attacked the Roman Catholic belief that Peter had been the first bishop of Rome by citing biblical passages in Acts that do not support such a belief. In the conclusion, the editor accused the Catholic church of engaging in mercantilism--attracting religious tourists to the site so that it could extract more money from the Catholic church's adherents. He called this practice another form of selling indulgences. Finally, he quoted John 8:32: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."²

One can see elements of Anglo Protestantism in the worship of Mexican American Methodists. The mass, with its emphasis on the sacrament and ritual,

² *El Heraldo Cristiano*, May, 1950, 3.

was replaced with the evangelical form of worship, where preaching became the central focus of worship. In addition to a distinctive rhetorical style of preaching, music played a prominent role in worship. The members sang hymns which were translated from English to Spanish. Much hymnology of the Mexican American Methodists is based upon the European tradition, such as "Castillo Fuerte es Nuestro Dios" ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God") and "¡Santo, Santo, Santo!" ("Holy, Holy, Holy"). Much of the music within Sunday morning worship services brought European melodies and theology to the Mexican American Methodists.

Some of the most distinctive elements of Anglo Protestantism adopted by Mexican Americans in Texas and New Mexico were: individual knowledge of the Bible, a puritanical system of ethics following a radical conversion experience, an evangelical theology of salvation, and an evangelical style of worship.

In *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, sociologist Peter Berger states that "culture is there for everybody....To be in culture means to share in a particular world of objectivities with others."³ Mexican American Methodists no longer shared in many of the same objectifications of the Mexican culture as Catholics. This is because Mexican American Methodists had divorced themselves from one of the chief transmitters of Mexican American culture--the Catholic church. Thus, the Mexican American Methodists were in the Mexican American culture, but not fully a part of it, if one holds that Catholic affiliation is constitutive of Mexican American identity.

Following conversion into the Methodist church, Mexican American Methodists became further acquainted with the beliefs of Anglo Protestantism. They appropriated the underlying value system of Methodism through initiation into and participation in the church. The values conveyed by the Methodist church became useful in socializing the Mexican American Methodist into American society. Peter Berger defines socialization as

the process by which a new generation is taught to live in accordance with the institutional programs of the society. Socialization can, of course, be described as a learning process. The new generation is initiated into the meanings of the culture, learns to participate in its established tasks, and to accept the roles as well as identities that make up its social structure.⁴

The process of socialization, in this case, was also a process of acculturation. As Mexican American Methodists adopted the beliefs of Methodism, they also adopted the value systems which were based as much on Anglo society as on the Christian faith--elements such as education, social mobility, democracy, and individualism. The movement of the Mexican American Methodists was from

³ Berger, Peter L., *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 10.

⁴ Berger, 15.

being members of the Mexican American Catholic community to being members of an isolated religious community which practiced a form of religion alien to the majority within the barrio.

The Methodist Church's emphasis on education was possibly the most influential value that accompanied the transmission of the Methodist faith to the Mexican American in the Southwest. The Methodist Church had already established colleges and private schools in Texas in the 1800s and early 1900s. Part of the mission strategy of the Methodist Church was to provide educational opportunities so that Mexican Americans could improve their social condition. To achieve this aim, two private Methodist secondary schools were established--Lydia Patterson Institute, founded in El Paso in 1913, and Holding Institute, founded in Laredo in 1880. They were also important centers for training Mexican and Mexican American clergy. Several influential ministers of the Rio Grande Conference were educated at Lydia Patterson. The role of these institutions cannot be overemphasized, for they served as vehicles through which Methodist Mexican and Mexican American students could gain a private, religious-based education and prepare for college studies. It also served to prepare young men for ordained ministry.

The emphasis upon education can be seen in *El Heraldo Cristiano*. In the June, 1950, edition, the back page contains pictures of the graduating classes of Holding Institute and Lydia Patterson Institute. The students are pictured with their caps and gowns. In another section, there is a two-page spread containing pictures of graduates from different colleges.⁵ In another page of the same edition, there is the report of one of the conference leaders, Dr. Nañez, receiving an honorary doctoral degree from Southwestern University at the school's recent graduation ceremony.⁶ To those families whose parents were laborers, and who did not have opportunities to achieve social advancement within the Anglo-dominated society, the pictures of other Mexican Americans attaining high school and college education served to make them aware that Mexicans and Mexican Americans could attain educational achievements, even doctorates, through the help of the Methodist Church.

Peter Berger defines socialization as a learning process. A crucial part of the learning process includes internalization. Berger states, "the individual not only learns the objectivated meanings but identifies with and is shaped by them. He draws them into himself and makes them *his* meanings. He becomes not only one who possesses these meanings, but one who represents and expresses them."⁷ This step of socialization is the culmination of society's role in identity formation. Through internalization of the objectivated meanings of Anglo American

⁵ *El Heraldo Cristiano*, June, 1950, 20.

⁶ *El Heraldo Cristiano*, June, 1950, 5.

⁷ Berger, 15.

Methodism, the Mexican American Methodist identified with the sacred world view of Methodism and its accompanying value system.

A primary method of socialization employed by the church was Sunday School. The Sunday School was a distinctively Protestant method of religious education. Its focus was upon educating the church members about the truths expressed in the Bible. In 1950 *El Heraldito Cristiano* published an article about the importance of Sunday School. The author quoted an authority on Christian education to explain the purpose of religious education:

The purpose of the instruction...is to give knowledge of the great religious truths, so that students can *incorporate* [italics mine] them in their lives, and establish habits of Christian conduct....It is necessary to choose the curriculum and to present it in such a way that the student can *assimilate* [italics mine] the facts and truths and therefore express them in his or her conduct in natural forms of service.⁸

In addition to education, socialization also occurred through the promotion of the English language. As the members of the conference advanced in their education, they became bilingual. This was quite an accomplishment, for in the decades before the 1960s, Spanish was the predominant language of the barrio. With fluency in both English and Spanish, they were able to navigate between the two worlds of the Mexican heritage and the larger Anglo society. With competence in both languages, the bilingual members literally lived in two worlds, that of their Mexican American roots and that of the encompassing United States society. They were not only bilingual, they were bi-cultural.

Their bilingual fluency allowed them to adopt the meanings embedded in the two language systems. Jorge Lara Braud states

When we deal with language we deal with life at its core. It is the means by which an individual decodes the meaning of his existence in the world and encodes his experiences for creative dialogue with others. Memory, affection, aspiration, reflection, anxiety, discovery, religion and a myriad of other personal experiences are mediated through language.⁹

Language contains the structures of thought and meaning relative to its culture. An incident might move the bilingual Mexican American to respond with a Spanish modismo (Dime con quien andas y te diré quien eres [Tell me who you associate with and I will tell you who you are]) or an English saying (The early bird gets the worm). Each of these sayings expresses certain cultural values. Being

⁸ *El Heraldito Cristiano*, May, 1950, 13.

⁹ Lara Braud, Jorge, "Bilingualism for Texas: Education for Fraternity," in *Chicano: The Evolution of a People* (Winston Press: Minneapolis, Minn.: 1973), 343.

bilingual, the individual internalized to some extent the cultural values embedded in both languages. The individual's bilingualism provided him or her with a bicultural identity.

The Anglo leadership, which maintained administrative control of the Methodist church's ministry to Mexican Americans until the early 1960s, promoted the learning and speaking of English. For example, in another conference, the Latin American Provisional Conference of Arizona and California, the Anglo Bishop and superintendents refused to allow Spanish in the conference gatherings and meetings. This was particularly frustrating for those Mexican American members who did not know English. This decision was made even though the two Anglo superintendents were fully bilingual. Nevertheless, Spanish continued to be used in daily conversation.¹⁰ The English-speaking Methodist Church, whose church leaders promoted English, conveyed to Mexican American Methodists the message that social success and integration into the Methodist Church was possible only through the mastery of English.

The members of the Rio Grande Conference were socialized into what Berger calls the "institutional programs of the society" through an emphasis on Christian education. The primary role of the conference Director on Christian Education from 1939 until the late 1950's was to train conference and local church leaders to carry out the tasks of their offices.¹¹ Church members required "leadership training"--another form of socialization--so that they could structure the conference and the local church in accordance with the standards of the Methodist Church. The conference's Office of Director of Christian Education, one of the most influential vehicles for socialization in the conference, facilitated the conference's accommodation to the standards and models of the general church.

In 1939, the General Conference of The Methodist Church mandated two years of college education as the minimum educational level for its ordained ministers.¹² The Rio Grande Conference, whose members were of a much lower educational and economic level than the rest of the church, struggled to live up to the standards of the general church. The conference members, desiring to have equal status with the general church, rejected a proposal to have lower educational standards for its clergy than the general church.¹³ The Methodist Women of the conference organized its membership to provide loans and scholarships to students preparing for ministry. The conference established ties with Perkins School of

10 Sylvest, Edwin Jr., "Hispanic American Protestantism in the United States," in *Fronteras: A History of the Latin American Church in the USA Since 1513*, ed. Moisés Sandoval (San Antonio: Mexican American Cultural Center, 1983), 326.

11 Nañez, *History of the Rio Grande Conference*, 100.

12 Nañez, 104.

13 Nañez, 103-104.

Theology in 1945 to prepare Mexican Americans for ministry.¹⁴ In its effort to ensure equal standards of educational training for its clergy, the conference leadership spent much energy to maintain standards equal to those of the general church.

In review, the Methodist church promoted social mobility through educational opportunities. The evidence for this is seen in the establishment of private secondary schools, in the emphasis on religious education in the local church, and the training of leaders for effective service within the church. Each of these educational programs functioned equally as programs of socialization into the larger American society. As young people acquired a mastery of English, educational degrees, and leadership abilities, they were ready to function as relative "equals" within the larger society. They could move from unskilled labor jobs to professional positions. This section has attempted to demonstrate the extent to which religion functioned as an agent of acculturation into mainstream society and the religious institution.

Even though they had adopted the Methodist faith, the Mexican American Methodists continued to maintain their relationships almost exclusively within the Mexican American community. Mexican American Methodists received many of Anglo culture's values through the acceptance of the Methodist religion without establishing extensive relationships with the Anglo community. Among those values were the belief in social advancement through education and diligent work, individualism, and democracy. Hence, there are two frames of references for the Mexican American Methodist--the value system and church structure of the Methodist church and the culture of the Mexican American community within which they lived.

The Dysfunction of Methodism for Mexican American Methodists

The primary question for this paper is: What is the nature of social change in the Mexican American community caused by the adoption of Methodism? A corollary question is: How did adoption of the Methodist religion change the Mexican American Methodists' place within their Mexican American community, and their place within the larger American society? The answer to these questions lies in an examination of the dysfunctional effects caused by the disjunction of commitments to the religion promoted by the Anglo-dominated society and commitments to the Mexican American community and culture. This historical examination studies the Mexican American Methodists' efforts to resolve this disjunction of commitments.

Thus far, we have viewed religion through the use of functional theory. We have seen how religion served to bring the Mexican American into mainstream society, not through the specific content of religion, but through the Anglo values

14 Nañez, 107.

embedded within Methodism and through socialization into the Anglo institution. Functional theory has traditionally viewed religion as the central agent of socialization. According to functional theory, religion functions to legitimize the existing order through an appeal to extraordinary powers. Religion functions to offer a set of beliefs about the world and a corresponding ethos to which members of society can offer their ultimate commitments.¹⁵

While functional theory would explain the sociological effect of Anglo Protestantism as the legitimation of Anglo society and the socialization of Mexican Americans into mainstream American society, it nevertheless overlooks the dysfunctional effects of Methodism, and other Protestant churches, upon the Mexican American. A primary dysfunction of Methodism for the Mexican American is that the values which it transmits offer potential legitimation of Mexican Americans as full participants in an Anglo-dominated society, thereby encouraging the denial of their Mexican American identity. The legitimation provided by Methodism of Anglo values challenged the legitimacy of the Mexican American's own culture, thereby creating competing demands for commitments. The legitimation of Anglo values--such as the importance of time and punctuality, democratic decision-making, and upward mobility--through Methodism was especially dysfunctional when Mexican Americans who wholeheartedly accepted the "American way of life" disparaged their own cultural heritage and other Mexican Americans who did not assimilate into mainstream American society.

In his article, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," Clifford Geertz points out the inability of functional theory to explain adequately the dysfunctional consequences which play a role in social change. He states that "the emphasis on systems in balance, on social homeostasis, and on timeless structural pictures, leads to a bias in favor of 'well-integrated societies...and to a tendency to emphasize the functional aspects of a people's social usages and customs rather than their dysfunctional implications."¹⁶ Geertz's assessment of functional theory is helpful for this study, for functional theory cannot adequately explain the dysfunctional effects of the Anglos' evangelization of Mexican Americans, or the Mexican Americans' continued participation in the Methodist church. As stated above, functional theory fails to take into account the cross-pressure experienced by Mexican American Protestants between commitments to their Mexican American community and commitments to their Methodist religion.

One dysfunction of the transmission of Methodism within the Mexican American community was the division of status based upon religious affiliation. Until the arrival of Anglo Protestantism in the Southwest, Catholicism played an integrating role in the Mexican and Mexican American cultures. Now, this new,

15 Glock, Charles Y. and Rodney Stark, "Religion and the Integration of Society, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1965), 170.

16 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1973), 143.

competing, religion would function to create division within families and neighborhoods. The emergence of Mexican Protestant congregations throughout Texas and New Mexico created antipathy between the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. The difference in sacred symbols of Anglo Protestantism and Mexican Catholicism, and the meanings those symbols conveyed served to promote separation, and even conflict, between the Catholic and Protestant Mexican Americans. In one case in the Rio Grande Valley, the priest in the Catholic parish across the street from a Mexican American Methodist church would ring the bells of his church while the Methodists worshipped. In other cases, Catholic children would taunt Protestant children by calling them "Aleluyas," a pejorative term to make fun of the way in which members shouted "aleluya" during the worship service. These incidents represent the underlying conflict that existed within the Mexican culture as a result of religious affiliation. The analysis which Geertz made of the Javanese kampong predicament can also be made here: "It is around religious beliefs and practices...that the most seriously disruptive events seem to cluster. Religion here is somehow the center and source of stress, not merely the reflection of stress elsewhere in the society."¹⁷

Geertz believes that functional theory fails to explain adequately social change because it does not sufficiently distinguish between cultural and sociological processes.¹⁸ Functional theory usually focuses on one process and essentially subsumes the other process into it. Geertz provides a means for distinguishing between culture and society:

One of the more useful ways...of distinguishing between culture and social system is to see the former as an ordered system of meaning and of symbols, in terms of which social interaction takes place; and to see the latter as the pattern of social interaction itself....Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations.¹⁹

Geertz notes the ambiguities of cultural meanings, symbols, and relationships that occurred in a society composed of residents from the rural villages and the urban elites. Kampong society was "a transitional sort of society [whose] members stand in between the more or less fully urbanized elite and the more or less traditionally organized peasantry."²⁰ In the midst of social change within the Kampong, there were two different dimensions of the same

17 Geertz, 164.

18 Geertz, 143.

19 Geertz, 144-45.

20 Geertz, 164.

phenomenon which need to be addressed independently in order to understand the nature of social change. First, the agricultural villagers who migrated into the urban Kampong society continued to operate according to their cultural traditions, regardless of their new social setting. Within the cultural dimension, they operated out of the need for "logic-meaning integration."²¹ Second, the Kampong society also operated on a sociological level, the level of political allegiances and social relationships. Only by examining both the cultural and social dimensions as separate processes can one adequately explain the process of social change.²²

Geertz's article on the Javanese funeral does not indicate the final form which social change takes in the Kampong village. This is because his principal interest is to demonstrate the methodological need to distinguish between cultural and sociological analysis of human interaction. Although Geertz does not specify the social change brought about by the disjunction between culture and society, he demonstrates the tensions and dysfunctions that arise when cultural and sociological forces are incongruous. In the case of the Javanese society, social relationships became strained and religious rituals failed to provide cohesiveness within the community as its members became entangled in the politicization of their society.

The Mexican American Methodists lived in a constant state of tension. They stood with one foot in the Anglo society by practicing the predominant religion of the dominant society and another foot in the Mexican culture by maintaining the cultural traditions and relationships in the Mexican American community. The Mexican American Methodists thus operated on different levels. On the sociological level, they maintained allegiance to the religious institution of Anglo society. On the cultural level, they maintained their cultural heritage through their continued location within the Mexican American community. The discontinuity between social integration and cultural integration is evident in the fact that whereas the Mexican American Methodists adopted the religion of Anglo society, they continued to live in the Mexican American community. They maintained their network of relationships almost exclusively within the Mexican American community.

Given the discontinuity between social and cultural integration, the Mexican American Methodists engaged in a constant balancing act; they had to simultaneously direct themselves in the direction of their Methodist religion--which was a manifestation of Anglo society and culture--and in the direction of his Mexican American culture and community. They lived and participated in the Mexican culture while simultaneously practicing the religion of Anglo society and culture.

21 Geertz: 169.

22 Geertz, 169.

At first glance, such a balancing act would seem impossible to continue over a long period of time. And for many it was. There were Mexican American Methodists who, upon achieving employment in the professional sector, transferred their church membership to the Anglo Methodist church. There were also others who eventually returned to the Catholic Church. Because Mexican American Methodists were an "in-between" people--in between the culture of their heritage and the religious institution of Anglo society--there was always some movement of members of the Rio Grande Conference in both directions. The question is, how did Mexican American Methodists continue to maintain such a disjointed set of commitments? How could they maintain an integrative identity with one frame of reference based upon their culture and another based upon their religion, a religion that was not a part of their cultural heritage?

Following Geertz's distinction between cultural analysis and sociological analysis, one answer to the question of maintenance of identity resides in the cultural transformation of *Anglo* Methodism into *Mexican American* Methodism. In the same way that the indigenous peoples of Mexico adapted to the imposition of Catholicism by integrating it within their own religious and cultural framework, the Mexican American Methodist appropriated the Methodist faith in such a way that it became a form of Methodism distinct from that of the Anglo culture that brought it to the Southwest. Mexican American Methodism became a unique culture, a qualified accommodation of both Mexican culture and Anglo societal values. It incorporated the sacred world view and values of Anglo-dominated Methodism and the institutional organization of the dominant society with the cultural customs of its Mexican heritage. Methodism was practiced within the context of *Mexican American* cultural patterns.

For example, in one church recently, more people attended the worship service that celebrated Mother's Day than the Easter service. In the same area, the Anglo Methodist churches tended to de-emphasize Mother's Day since it was not a part of the "official" religious calendar. This emphasis on Mother's Day in the Rio Grande congregation is the result of the significance of family unity within Mexican American culture and the recognition of the mother as the foundation of the family. Another example of the transmutation of Anglo Methodism into Mexican American Methodism occurs in baptism. The Mexican custom of solidifying friendships through the institution of *padrinos* (similar to the institution of godparents) continued in the ritual of baptism in the Rio Grande Conference.

Although many members of the conference spoke English, worship continued to be held in Spanish. Spanish was still the primary language in the home and with friends. In fact, the Spanish worship service was an important means of learning the Spanish language. Several conference members reported learning Spanish by listening to the sermons and singing Spanish hymns in church. As an agent of cultural meanings and customs, the church enabled its members to maintain their Mexican American culture.

As the above examples demonstrate, one reason why Mexican American Methodism persisted was because it sufficiently adjusted to the Mexican American culture. This was one way of lessening the disjunction between the Anglo religion and Mexican culture.

Another answer to the question of how the members of the conference maintained some distinction between Mexican culture and Anglo society is explained on a sociological basis--in the latent function of educational advancement sponsored by the Methodist church. The Methodist church provided the Mexican American Methodists with the skills needed to maintain their ecclesiastical institutions. The Mexican American Methodist eventually became sufficiently socialized into Anglo society to acquire the skills necessary to function according to the standards of the larger Anglo church. Throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s, the conference organized itself to operate according to the same standards as other Anglo conferences. As they became oriented to the values and structures of the larger Anglo society, and as they acquired the necessary skills through leadership opportunities within and without the church, the indigenous leadership was finally able to administer the conference without Anglo leadership, except that of the Bishop.

In the 1950's, church leaders in other conferences and national agencies had predicted that, as the Mexican American Methodists became more educated and socialized into mainstream society, they would integrate with the rest of the church. They expected the eventual merger of the Rio Grande Conference with the Anglo conferences. In fact, exactly the opposite occurred; education created a sense of self-awareness for Mexican American Methodists that enabled the conference members to *resist* attempts at further integration into Anglo society and absorption into the Methodist Church. Particularly in the 1960s, college education provided conference members with a means of critical reflection, enabling them to evaluate the history of Mexican and U. S. relations from a critical standpoint. Through education, both laity and clergy advanced to a limited degree economically and socially into mainstream society. The educational, social, and economic advancement of the conference's membership enabled the conference to receive sufficient financial and professional resources for the maintenance of a unique Mexican American institution. In sum, Mexican American Methodists benefited from the Methodist church by receiving educational assistance, and, more importantly, values that stressed the importance of education. The appropriation and actualization of strong educational values led to social and economic upward mobility. This educational, social, and economic advancement, in turn, enabled the conference leaders to eventually assume control of their institution.

The socialization of the Rio Grande Conference's members enabled its leadership to administer the conference in such a way that their institution could foster the advancement of their Mexican American culture. Berger states that society, including its institutions, is necessary for the persistence of culture:

Society, therefore, is not only an outcome of culture, but a necessary condition of the latter. Society structures, distributes, and co-ordinates the world-building activities of men[sic]. And only in society can the products of those activities persist over time.²³

Mexican American Methodists had to develop an institution that would serve as the womb that would permit their Mexican culture to continue. The distinct Mexican American Methodist culture would have eventually disintegrated had the social institution of the conference not been present to allow it to flourish.

What was the extent of the Mexican American Methodists' assimilation into mainstream society? Interestingly, while other Protestant ecclesial organizations dedicated solely to Mexican American missions existed parallel to the Rio Grande Conference, eventually the Rio Grande Conference was the only one that continued as a separate and relatively autonomous institution. The Presbyterian Mexican synod in Texas merged with the Anglo synod in the 1950's, and the Latin American Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church in California and Arizona merged with the existing Anglo conferences within its region in 1948. In both cases, the advances made by the Protestant church into the Mexican American community receded into fainthearted efforts of the larger institution to maintain the work. Without the support of an institution dedicated solely to the ministry within the Mexican American community, the mission efforts of the Presbyterians in Texas and the Methodists in California and Arizona dwindled to a flicker.

Following the trend toward merger and absorption of Mexican American Protestants into the larger Anglo church, the National Board of Missions of the Methodist Church commissioned an extensive investigation in 1954 to study the possibility of merging the Rio Grande Conference with the Anglo conferences in Texas and New Mexico.²⁴ The Texas Planning Commission was established to bring all of the conferences in Texas and New Mexico together to discuss the relationship of the Anglo and Mexican American institutions. Roy A. Sturm, the director of the research project, expressed his opinion about the certainty of the eventual absorption of the Rio Grande Conference into the surrounding Anglo conferences. He stated in the introduction:

This is a study of the church ministering to a people who are in the process of acculturation, that is the adjustment of one social group to another.....Particularly the second generation finds himself in a very difficult and strange world. He is neither socialized in the Mexican culture nor acculturated in that of the new country. He is thus caught between two cultures and being

23 Berger, 7.

24 Nañez, 118.

at home in neither feels very insecure. This is the critical group and one to which the church should seek to help in every way possible.²⁵

While Sturm was correct in his analysis that the second generation Mexican American relates to both the Mexican American culture and the United States society, he revealed his bias that one cannot live fully in two worlds. To do so was to experience "insecurity." He believed the second generation Mexican American did not fully belong to either group. What Sturm failed to recognize was that the Spanish speaking Methodist Church provided that "home" where the second generation Mexican American Methodist could feel secure. Sturm stated that Mexican Americans engaged in nostalgia for the old times when congregations continued to worship in Spanish even when all of the members of the church were proficient in English. What Sturm understood as nostalgia the members of the churches understood as culture. Hence, the Spanish speaking Methodist church served as the bridge between the Mexican American barrio-- where Spanish was spoken, where Mexican values continued to persist, such as emphasis on the family--and the encompassing Anglo society.

Despite the adoption of Methodism, Mexican American Methodists did not fully integrate into mainstream Anglo society. Following the publication of the report on the relationship between the Anglo and Mexican American conferences in 1955, the Rio Grande Annual Conference voted overwhelmingly to maintain its status as an independent conference.²⁶ The vote was as much a rejection of total assimilation as it was a demonstration of cultural integrity.

In sum, the assimilation of Anglo values progressed to a certain point. When the Rio Grande Conference achieved sufficient indigenous leadership, and its members gained an appreciation of their Mexican heritage, they chose not to integrate with their Anglo counterparts. The Methodist church within the Mexican American community the church, which originally functioned as an instrument of acculturation, now became an instrument of cultural awareness. Education enabled the conference to develop its own indigenous leadership and eventually achieve relative autonomy over its governance, thereby fostering their cultural identity.

In Geertz' study, the peasants who had moved to the city struggled to maintain their cultural identity based upon the syncretic religion they had brought with them from the countryside. Although they were confronted with the Muslim demands for particular political and legal observances, they continued to cling to the beliefs of their village culture. For example, one man became irate when a Muslim official stated that he would not officiate at his son's funeral unless he

25 Sturm, Roy A., *Methodism in the Rio Grande Conference: A Study of Methodism's Ministry to a People in the Process of Acculturation* (New York: Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 1958), Introduction.

26 Nañez, 119.

publicly accept the Muslim faith. Such a suggestion was an offense to the man, for to do so meant renouncing his identity as a member of his village culture and religion. It would also have required a radical change in his social relationships.²⁷ The Muslim official's position demonstrates that Muslim society was not tolerant of the animistic religion prevalent throughout the Javanese countryside. The peasants who maintained their indigenous religion could not have a legal official preside over their funerals unless they converted to the Muslim religion. Thus, the members of the native Javanese culture were not allowed to fit into the Muslim-dominated society until they had renounced their religious and cultural identity.

Mexican American Methodists had already renounced the Catholic faith of their culture, yet they still could not fully participate in Anglo society. This is because the institutions of Anglo society were exclusionary. Political, social, and professional institutions were closed to Mexican American participation until the late 1950's, and in some cases until the 1970's. Until the 1970's, many cities and towns in Texas and New Mexico had never seen a Mexican American official on the city council or school board. Likewise, Spanish was prohibited from being spoken in public schools until the 1970's. While Mexican Americans could adopt the Protestant religion of Anglo society, they could not fully enter into an equal relationship with Anglos because of the political, economic, and social inequalities that existed. The exclusionary practice continued even in the Methodist Church until 1950. Nañez states:

Up to 1950, although the Rio Grande Conference had been one of the conferences in Texas and New Mexico for some ten years, it had little or no participation in the projects common to all the Methodist conferences in the two states. The Texas Planning Commission from the time it was organized was the first state group which included the Rio Grande Conference in a normal way as one of the conferences in the state.²⁸

Certainly this awareness of social inequality and exclusionary practice played a part in contributing to the separation of Mexican and Anglo Protestants.

A Shift in the Identity of Mexican American Methodists

From the 1930's until the 1960's, the emphasis of Mexican American Methodists' identity had been their religious affiliation. The conference mobilized its membership to achieve the standards of the Anglo society. This is truly an accomplishment given the level of poverty that existed in the Mexican American community.

In the 1960's, the Chicano movement brought an awakening of the Mexican American culture to members of the conference. New questions were

²⁷ Geertz, 155.

²⁸ Nañez, 119-120.

raised about the identity of the Mexican American and one's relationship to the Anglo society. Chicanos used their new label to differentiate themselves from both Mexican nationals and from the rest of Anglo society. It was as much a political term as it was a cultural term. A Chicano was someone of Mexican heritage who was born and raised in the United States, but who refused to be socialized into mainstream society.²⁹ Rather than seek legitimation from elements within the dominant Anglo society, Chicanos engaged in self-legitimation; they expected the rest of society to deal with them on their own terms. Ramon Macias states the idea that the Chicano "rejects the notion that he [sic] must subjugate his heritage in order to rise within American society. Instead he presents the Anglo with the alternative to accept him as an equal."³⁰

The Chicano movement challenged the leadership of the Rio Grande Conference to respond to the social needs of the Mexican American people and, on a personal level, to assert their own Mexican American identity. The self-awareness that the Chicano movement engendered prompted the conference leadership to a series of actions in the 1960's and 70's that protested the unequal relationship between the Mexican American and the Anglo. As a result of the Chicano movement, the focus of the conference leadership shifted from religious affiliation to cultural affiliation. Now, the Mexican American Methodist was a Mexican American who happened to be Methodist.

This dramatic shift in identity and allegiances resulted in the conference's conflict with other Anglo clergy and Methodist conferences. In the 1960's and 1970's, the conference affiliated itself with organizations that exposed the injustices of Anglo institutions. For example, the conference members supported the United Farm Workers grape boycott. In the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, much tension and hostility arose between the Anglo and Mexican American clergy and laity when the local and conference leadership supported the empowerment of Mexican Americans throughout the valley. Because the Rio Grande Conference leadership advocated the empowerment of all Mexican Americans and denounced the injustices of the Anglo-dominated society, including the injustices of the church of which they were a part, Mexican American Methodists no longer took their cultural identity for granted. Now, the sense of separation was felt more strongly between the Mexican American Methodist and the Anglo Methodist, and not so much between the Methodist Mexican American and the Catholic Mexican American. From the 1960's until the present, the Mexican American Methodists within the Rio Grande Conference have not sought integration but, rather, have struggled for social change with religious beliefs as the foundation for social justice.

29 Macias, Ysidro Ramon, "The Chicano Movement," in *A Documentary History of the Mexican Americans*, edited by Wayne Moquin, with Charles van Doren (New York: Praeger Publishers: 1971), 388.

30 Macias, 388.

Following the entrance of Mexican Americans into the Methodist tradition, the members of the Rio Grande Conference faced a dilemma. With their cultural roots in their Mexican American heritage and the religious and social ties located within the Anglo-dominated Methodist church, they faced a disjointed set of commitments. One way out of this dilemma, as mentioned before, was to renounce the Protestant faith and return to the Catholic Church--the religious mainstream of the Mexican American community. A second way was to achieve full accommodation with Protestantism, to the point of full assimilation within the Anglo-American society. Had every member of the conference taken the first or second route out of this dilemma, the term Mexican American Methodist would no longer have meaning for Methodists. The final answer to the dilemma was a *qualified* accommodation--making the necessary changes in the elements of Mexican American Methodism, and in the identity of its members, so that they could continue to exist and relate to both constituencies. These changes in the Rio Grande Conference included the cultural transposition of Anglo-American and Protestant forms of worship into Mexican cultural modes, the achievement of bilingualism, the adoption of educational values from Anglo society that eventually led to relative autonomy of the conference administration, and a greater appreciation of their Mexican American heritage.

Resumen

El presente artículo estudia la función que ha jugado el metodismo en el proceso de incorporación de los México-americanos a la sociedad y cultura dominantes, así como en el mantenimiento de la identidad cultural frente a esa otra cultura.

Todo esto le investiga el autor a la luz de las teorías de Geertz sobre la función y disfunción de las culturas, especialmente en tiempos de cambios como los que se producen en las encuentros entre diversas culturas.

El autor explica que el metodismo que los primeros misioneros llevaron a Texas y Nuevo México se definía a sí mismo en oposición al catolicismo, y que por tanto parte de su propósito al trabajar entre los México-americanos era asimilarlos a la cultura dominante, y apartarlos del catolicismo de su cultura ancestral.

Con el correr de los años y el crecimiento de una población metodista México-americana, y mucho más al surgir el movimiento chicano, muchos de estos metodistas México-americanos comenzaron a reclamar de nuevo su cultura y tradiciones, y a involucrarse en movimientos en pro de la justicia social, y ello frecuentemente llevó a conflictos con el resto del metodismo norteamericano.

El Marco Histórico-Social para Entender el Pentecostalismo en Puerto Rico

Rubén Pérez Torres

Introducción

Agradezco profundamente a los organizadores de este Foro¹ la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre la "Presencia del Pentecostalismo en la Sociedad Puertorriqueña" y específicamente hablarles sobre "El Marco Histórico-Social para entender el Pentecostalismo en P.R."

Lo primero que debo significar es que el movimiento pentecostal no es tan fácil de entender como parece. Hay una serie de razones que justifican su complejidad. Pasaré ligeramente a mencionar las más importantes, a saber:

1. **La heterogeneidad o diversidad** de grupos dentro del movimiento que aunque con elementos en común que los ubican dentro de este sector del evangelicismo puertorriqueño, poseen rasgos dogmáticos, prácticas litúrgicas y composición social muy particulares. Un ejemplo elocuente son las iglesias pentecostales independientes que pasan de 200 congregaciones y presentan diferencias bien marcadas.
2. **Paradojas o contradicciones dentro del Pentecostalismo** - Toda religión contiene contradicciones. Razón ha tenido el sociólogo Van Baal al afirmar: "Una paradoja subyace a la Religión". Sin embargo, en el pentecostalismo abundan mucho más.
3. **Su historia y teología han sido fundamentalmente orales** - Hace apenas menos de un año que se publicó la primera historia de una de las iglesias principales del pentecostalismo en P.R. bajo el título "Historia de la Iglesia Dios Pentecostal M.I. - Una Iglesia Ungida para Hacer Misión", por David Ramos Torres, Secretario General de dicha Iglesia en P.R. Debemos reconocer la aportación que se hace a través de esta obra al estudio del tema pentecostal. No obstante, siendo honesto este trabajo por ser de carácter apologético y carecer del elemento crítico, tan esencial para toda buena historia, no nos provee el marco referencial necesario y suficiente para conocer adecuadamente el pentecostalismo puertorriqueño.
4. **La ausencia de estudios sociológicos del fenómeno pentecostal.** Aquí prácticamente no se ha hecho nada. Tenemos muy buenos estudios antropológicos

¹ Este trabajo se presentó en el Foro sobre "La Presencia del Pentecostalismo en la Sociedad Puertorriqueña", en la Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico.

sobre el pentecostalismo en América Latina y en el Caribe que estaremos usando en esta presentación. Mas sobre P.R. no existe nada.

5. **La falta de apertura en el movimiento pentecostal en cuando al diálogo crítico con otras denominaciones protestantes y muchas veces entre sus propias ramas** ha obtaculizado muchas iniciativas que han surgido en el conglomerado evangélico buscando un acercamiento entre todos los sectores y una mayor comprensión de la obra evangélica puertorriqueña.

6. **La carestía de eventos como éste que auspicien el estudio e investigación del movimiento pentecostal en nuestro país.** Un foro como el que estamos realizando obviamente nos ayudará a tener una visión más clara de la presencia del pentecostalismo en Puerto Rico y las causas de su gran crecimiento. Para ello debemos examinar entonces el marco histórico-social de este gran movimiento.

El Aspecto Histórico

Convendría para mayor claridad, que viéramos algunos elementos históricos que sirven de trasfondo al surgimiento y desarrollo del pentecostalismo en nuestra Isla.

1. El pentecostalismo en Puerto Rico se inicia en el año 1916, dos años después de haber estallado la primera guerra mundial en Europa y un año antes de que Estados Unidos interviniera en dicha guerra.² Esto significa que la situación social y económica de Estados Unidos en esta época es de inestabilidad, desasosiego y un tanto de estrechez. La participación en esta guerra alteró la vida americana y sus instituciones. Entre otras cosas para ayudar con el envío de granos a Europa tuvo que limitar internamente el consumo de los mismos. Este racionamiento de alimentos y el mismo ambiente de miedo que producen los conflictos bélicos tuvieron que reflejarse en nuestra Isla, ya una posesión de los Estados Unidos. Juan L. Lugo, el misionero puertorriqueño fundador del movimiento pentecostal en nuestro país, recibe su llamado divino al ministerio en el mes de enero de 1916 en la ciudad de San Francisco, California.³ Su conversión ocurrida el 13 de junio de 1913 en la ciudad de Honolulu, Hawaii⁴ fue el fruto de unos misioneros que habían participado en el impresionante avivamiento que se verificó en la Calle Azuza 312 en Los Angeles del 1906 al al 1909.⁵ Desde sus inicios los líderes pentecostales consideraron este

2 Lewis Paul Todd & Merle Curti *American's History*; (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1950) Págs. 626-637.

3 Juan L.Lugo *Pentecostés en P.R. y la Vida de un Misionero* (Río Piedras: Instituto Bíblico Mizpa, 1970) Pag.10.

4 *Ibid*, Pag.5.

5 Walter J. Hollenweger *El Pentecostalismo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Aurora, 1976) Pág. 9.

derramamiento del Espíritu Santo como la evidencia del fin de los tiempos. Uno de los principios doctrinales más importantes de este movimiento fue la inminente Segunda venida de Cristo. De hecho en el 1906, el 18 de abril un gran terremoto sacudió a la ciudad de San Francisco y casi la mitad de la ciudad fue reducida a escombros. Según Bloch-Hoell, un estudioso del pentecostalismo, este suceso natural ayudó a aumentar la asistencia de la congregación de la Calle Azusa y contribuyó a profecías sobre el inmediato retorno del Señor. Por lo tanto hubo desde los comienzos del movimiento pentecostal una urgencia por evangelizar y hacer la obra misionera en el mundo ya que se esperaba en esos días la venida de Jesucristo.⁶ Esa misma visión y urgencia la encontramos en Juan L. Lugo cuando decide regresar a su país para llevarle el mensaje pentecostal y allí encuentra una situación propicia para su proclamación: estrechez económica y un ambiente de inseguridad por los avatares de la guerra.

2. El pentecostalismo comienza en P.R. 18 años después de la entrada de los norteamericanos a la Isla. Fue un período de gran choque cultural entre la cosmovisión, tradiciones y costumbres españolas y las norteamericanas. La invasión estadounidense además de motivos políticos tuvo una justificación religiosa como previamente la tuvo la colonización española con su gesta de cristianización. Los Estados Unidos con líderes religiosos y teólogos del llamado Evangelio Social como Josiah Strong (1847-1919) se consideraron llamados por Dios para extender el progreso norteamericano como parte de la evangelización del mundo, quehacer que ha sido llamado el destino manifiesto.⁷

Consciente o inconscientemente Lugo fue participante es ese proceso de norteamerización, aunque en un menor grado que los misioneros de las iglesias históricas. Por un lado identificando la fe protestante con el "American way of life" trajo y representó un mensaje positivo y estusiasta para los isleños. Por otro lado por sus raíces puertorriqueñas sirvió de protector de la cultura boricua e infundió confianza y seguridad en el paisano que se sentía amenazado por la cultura anglosajona. De este modo, su obra misionera alcanzó a los que simpatizaban con la nueva situación política y también llegó a aquellos que la resentían. Evidencia contundente de este logro es que en unos 6 años la nueva fe evangélica incorporaba 15 iglesias bajo el nombre de Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal. Este suceso significativo ocurrió el 3 de febrero de 1992.⁸ Al considerar la labor misional de Lugo, a mi entender y a la luz del desarrollo autóctono del

6 Rubén Pérez Torres, *The Pastor's Role in Educational Ministry in the Pentecostal church of God in Puerto Rico*, Tesis doctoral para el grado de "Doctor of Ministry" presentada a la School of Theology at Claremont, 1979, Pág. 36.

7 Daniel R. Rodríguez, *La Primera Evangelización Norteamericana en Puerto Rico, 1898-1930* (Mexico: Ediciones Borinquén, 1986) Págs. 6970.

8 David Ramos Torres, *Historia de la Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, M.I.* (Río Piedras: Editorial Pentecostal, 1992) Págs. 56-8.

pentecostalismo borincano, encuentro que principalmente y sobre todo jugó un papel de puertorriqueñización frente a la amenaza extrajerizante. Prueba de ello es la indigenización, desde prácticamente sus inicios, en cuanto a la misión de la Iglesia y su sostén propio que alcanzó el movimiento pentecostal. En el presente los concilios pentecostales desde Puerto Rico se han extendido al mundo entero financiando su quehacer misionero con las aportaciones de sus iglesias locales aquí en nuestra bella Isla.

3. Las décadas del 50 al 80 constituyen la época, a mi juicio, de mayor crecimiento en el pentecostalismo tradicional. Esto es, dentro de las iglesias pentecostales clásicas en P.R., a saber: Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, M.I., Asambleas de Dios, Iglesia de Dios "Mission Board". Tomando como modelo la primera iglesia pentecostal y la más grande, la Pentecostal M.I. encontramos que de la década del 60 con 150 iglesias aproximadamente crecen rápidamente a 475 congregaciones en la década del 80. Es interesante notar que en este momento nuestro país está experimentando una transición de una sociedad agrícola a una industrial. La fe pentecostal entonces sirvió como respuesta a lo que el sociólogo chileno Juan Sepúlveda llamaría crisis de sentido. El añade al respecto: "El pentecostalismo aparece como una respuesta religiosa eficaz a una crisis de los sectores populares, que llámese anomía o déficit de sentido da cuenta de un riesgo permanente de perderse".⁹

4. La década del 80 al 90 presenta un período de gran crisis social en P.R. contribuyendo a la diversificación del movimiento pentecostal. Surgen iglesias: (a) con énfasis en la prosperidad y menos legalistas o más liberales, (b) independientes ultraconservadoras y bien apocalípticas, (c) carismáticas de extracción católica, (d) carismáticas de extracción evangélica.

El crecimiento pentecostal ahora diversificado llega a niveles insospechados. De cada 10 evangélicos, puede decirse que 8 son pentecostales. Todos los evangélicos, más de 1 millón, hemos sido influidos por el movimiento pentecostal. Sin embargo, el lema de "Puerto Rico será para Cristo" ahora bastante alcanzado no ha representado lo que siempre habíamos soñado: La transformación o por lo menos el mejoramiento significativo de nuestra comunidad. La descomposición social manifestada por la criminalidad, el divorcio, la violencia doméstica, el alcoholismo, el SIDA, el maltrato de menores, el juego, el consumerismo y/o materialismo han crecido como nunca antes.

El aspecto social

Aunque ya mencionamos varias implicaciones sociales de los elementos históricos, quisiera en esta segunda parte señalar algunas interpretaciones

sociológicas adicionales que se han ofrecido para justificar el crecimiento del pentecostalismo en la América Latina y el Caribe que creo que son válidas para la realidad puertorriqueña. Dichas interpretaciones conciben al pentecostalismo de la siguiente manera:

1. **Como una religión ambivalente o bien paradójica.** Habíamos previamente comentado que en toda religión o experiencia religiosa se da la paradoja o contradicción. Pero para estos antropólogos y/o sociólogos de la religión el pentecostalismo lo es por antonomasia.

Andrés Droogers, antropólogo holandés, escribe un artículo intitulado "Visiones paradójicas sobre una religión paradójica. Modelos explicativos del crecimiento del pentecostalismo en Brasil y Chile".¹⁰ En el mismo él establece que una de las causas del crecimiento pentecostal es una capacidad de ambivalencia o contradicciones. En su abordaje presenta las siguientes paradojas:

a) La fe pentecostal rehabilita a los laicos, justamente por medio del énfasis de los dones del Espíritu Santo. Sin embargo, hay iglesias organizadas de una manera jerárquica donde los pastores tienen mucho poder. Lo jerárquico e igualitario se dan simultáneamente.

b) Hay amplia libertad para expresarse emocionalmente. Por otro lado hay una dirección rígida comunicada por un discurso fundamentalista y legalista presente en las prédicas y en la aplicación de la disciplina.

c) La sociedad circundante es vista como algo funesto y ellos se han despedido de este mundo y han comenzado una vida nueva. Están como en huelga social. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo son vistos como ciudadanos y trabajadores ejemplares.

d) Evitan generalmente la política por verla como algo sucio y a veces del diablo, no obstante con su abstención y/o participación conservadora asumen una posición política.

e) Están firmemente convencidos y así lo predicán que el fin de los tiempos y la venida de Cristo están a la vuelta de la esquina, pero construyen templos costosísimos y lujosísimos y adquieren otras propiedades bien costosas como si el Señor no fuese a regresar próximamente.

¹⁰ *Algo más que Opio* - Una lectura antropológica del pentecostalismo latinoamericano y caribeño, Bárbara Boudewignse, André Droogers, Frans Kawsteeg - editores (San José: DEI, 1991) Págs. 17-40.

f) Las mujeres componen la mayoría de la feligresía y realizan un rol importante, no obstante se las tiene subordinadas e inclusive no se les ordena al completo ministerio ni ocupan el liderato principal de sus denominaciones.¹¹

Estas contradicciones a la vez que desafío respecto a la comprensión de la realidad compleja pentecostal, entrañan una oferta evangélica que alcanza a todos no importa las posturas que asuman sobre estas cuestiones.

2. **Como una religión anómica.** Anomía es el término sociológico para indicar ausencia de normas y/o reglas como consecuencia de cambios drásticos a la misma vez que surgen nuevas normas y principios rectores.

Emilio Willens entre otros considera que el pentecostalismo ha provisto con nuevas normas a las personas que por algún cambio social, migración, cambio de trabajo o pérdida del mismo, etc. han dejado las estructuras católicas y/o evangélicas históricas como anacrónicas y han abrazado la nueva visión pentecostal.¹²

3. **Como una religión que le ofrece a la gente de las clases predominantemente bajas una adaptación** a las circunstancias sociales cambiantes, pero también contiene una protesta simbólica contra estos cambios.

4. **Como una religión que proporciona un contenido como una nueva vision de la salvación** que se puede resumir así:

a) El pentecostalismo más que una doctrina propone una experiencia de Dios particularmente intensa, nueva y diferente a la que ofrece la sociedad en general cuyo énfasis es en el sentir y no en el conocer.

b) Abre las puertas a una experiencia con Dios sin mediaciones. Encuentro directo con Dios.

c) La posibilidad de esta experiencia con Dios es comunicada en un lenguaje conocido, verbal y no verbal, usando la lengua del pueblo.

d) El sujeto del anuncio es también alguien del pueblo.

e) La experiencia se alimenta por la incorporación de una comunidad de gente que comparte la experiencia y la celebra en

11 *Ibid*, Pág. 77-93). Recientemente las Asambleas de Dios comenzaron a ordenarlas pastores.

12 *Ibid* (Pág.23).

solidaridad afectiva y efectiva con los nuevos hermanos y/o hermanas.¹³

Otros factores sociales que contribuyeron al surgimiento y desarrollo de este segmento entusiasta del protestantismo puertorriqueño fueron los siguientes:

1. **El analfabetismo crónico que sufrían las masas en nuestro país.** Al respecto en un informe escolar se decía: "La ignorancia es densa y aterradora, su gran necesidad: el Evangelio y Escuelas. Más del 90% no puede leer ni escribir..."¹⁴ Esta situación de muy poca instrucción impidió que las iglesias históricas (presbiteriana, bautistas, discípulos de Cristo, metodistas, etc.) que habían llegado con el nuevo régimen estadounidense pudieran llegar efectivamente a la comunidad puertorriqueña. La religión protestante que dependía de la Biblia como el libro de regla, fe y práctica no apeló a la mayoría ya que no podían leerla. Sin embargo el evangelio pentecostal aunque enfáticamente bíblico se dirigía más a la emoción que al intelecto y de este modo conquistó a muchos más isleños. Claro, en el día de hoy con la masificación de la educación en Puerto Rico las iglesias pentecostales están llenas de toda clase de profesionales y muchos de sus pastores tienen una mejor preparación académica.

2. **El principio de separación de Iglesia y Estado que se estableció en la Isla con el advenimiento del gobierno norteamericano**¹⁵ y la preferencia de dicho gobierno por el protestantismo, propició el surgimiento de la fe evangélica. Esta realidad socio-política no le permitió al catolicismo perseguir al pentecostalismo en P.R. como ocurrió en Latinoamérica. Además un sector de la Iglesia Católica veía con buenos ojos el proceso de americanización que se estaba llevando a cabo y estaba inmerso en una lucha interna con el segmento católico de extracción española que no lo favorecía.¹⁶ La mayor oposición que enfrentaron los pentecostales fue con las iglesias evangélicas históricas quienes en los inicios del nuevo grupo trataron de persuadir a Juan L. Lugo y a Salomón Feliciano para que descontinuaran su obra y se unieran a alguna de sus denominaciones. Invitación que no aceptaron aunque tuvieron que defenderse exitosamente frente a las autoridades civiles.¹⁷

3. **La identificación con la ruralía, cosa que no lograron las iglesias históricas.** El protestantismo tradicional no pudo penetrar las zonas rurales

13 *Pentecostalismo y Liberación*, Págs. 86-87.

14 Citado por Daniel Rodríguez en *La Primera Evangelización Norteamericana en P.R.*, Págs. 213.

15 Revista de Historia "La Iglesia Protestante como Agente de Americanización en Puerto Rico" por Samuel Silva Gotay, Págs. 11-13.

16 Revista de Historia "La Iglesia Católica en el proceso político de la americanización de P.R. a partir de 1898 (11)" por Samuel Silva Gotay, Págs. 168-171.

17 Roberto Domínguez - *Pioneros de Pentecostés*, (Río Piedras: Cooperativa de Artes Gráficas, 1971) Págs. 85-92.

puertorriqueñas. Su mensaje, estrategia misional y sus objetivos estaban enfocados a la comunidad urbana. Sobre el particular en esta época se escribe: "El numérico de las iglesias, que otro obstáculo es el carácter predominante urbano de la organización y programa ... Sin embargo, un ministerio y un programa de extensión ajustado al Puerto Rico rural aún no se ha desarrollado."¹⁸ El pentecostalismo tuvo acceso a la población rural boricua que era la mayor en aquel tiempo. Porque su mensaje originalmente fue proclamado por puertorriqueños usando su propio lenguaje y empleando su propia idiosincrasia de un culto sencillo con instrumentos típicos como el cuatro, la guitarra y el güiro celebrado en los propios hogares de los campesinos. Gente humilde con una predicación llana y escueta que quedó al corazón de los marginados. Se cantó del himnario, pero también se compusieron himnos del patio y coritos cuyo contenido simple y de carácter soteriológico y apocalíptico cautivó la mente de los oyentes.

4. El empleo de un ministerio o liderato puertorriqueño del pentecostalismo en oposición a misioneros norteamericanos que frecuentemente tenían gran dificultad para expresarse en español.

A pesar de que los misioneros de las iglesias históricas le dieron paso a un liderato misional nacional el proceso fue lento y detrimental para el crecimiento de sus congregaciones. Los pentecostales por lo previamente mencionado no confrontaron ese problema porque sus pastores y/o predicadores desde el origen de su misión fueron puertorriqueños. Además, como para el ejercicio de su vocación ministerial no se le exigía la preparación académica que se le requirió a los de las iglesias históricas, hubo siempre más candidatos disponibles para realizar la tarea evangelística. Esta proliferación de pastores contrastaba con la escasez que experimentaron las otras iglesias tanto católicas como protestantes. Muchos de los pastores pentecostales, especialmente de las áreas rurales, se levantaban de la misma congregación que había surgido en el barrio y de ahí que conocieran muy bien a su feligresía y compartieran su misma situación social, sueños y frustraciones.

5. La visión igualitaria entre los creyentes que aseguró la participación de todos sin distinciones marcadas entre ministros y laicos creando un sentido de pertenencia hacia el grupo. El pentecostalismo siendo una religión popular desde su génesis se caracterizó por un mensaje solidario de testimonios que encarnaba la igualdad.¹⁹ No empece al hecho de que la paradoja del pastor miembro con el pastor cacique se dé a la misma vez en la grey pentecostal, las diferencias de clases son prácticamente mínimas haciendo del grupo uno de mucha igualdad. El pentecostal se siente, porque se le ha enseñado y ejemplarizado, tan ministro como el pastor y/u otro líder religioso que también se echa la carga de

18 Citado por Daniel Rodríguez en *La Primera Evangelización Norteamericana en P.R.*, Págs. 229-230.

19 *Pentecostalismo y Liberación* "La Popular clave hermenéutica del Movimiento Pentecostal" por Carmelo Alvarez, Págs. 89.

hacer la obra misionera como el que más tiene la responsabilidad en virtud de su posición. Este compromiso misional le concede desarrollar unos eslabones que le encadenarán con su comunidad eclesial al extremo que dará el todo por el todo para que su congregación crezca y cumpla eficazmente con su misión.

Conclusión

En esta modesta y breve presentación he tratado de trazar, desde una perspectiva crítica, el marco histórico-social para entender un poco mejor al pentecostalismo en P.R. Lo he hecho con la mayor objetividad y honestidad posible porque amo al pentecostalismo. Me formé social y religiosamente dentro de él y reconozco humildemente su gran aportación para mi vida personal. Sin embargo, todo movimiento para su mejor desarrollo debe mantener un proceso crítico que le permita analizar su trayectoria y la dirección que ha tomado. Creo que con la excepción de alguna denominación clásica pentecostal este examen crítico no se está dando. Humildemente recomiendo o presento varios desafíos y sugerencias:

1. Que se auspicie un diálogo entre iglesias pentecostales, históricas y evangélicas más conservadoras para desarrollar una pastoral evangélica que presente la fe cristiana como alternativa ante la crisis social que nos aflige y abruma a todos en nuestro país.

2. Que las denominaciones pentecostales y evangélicas en general se reúnan y examinen la escatología apocalíptica que se le está predicando al pueblo a la luz de una teología cristiana más madura y una interpretación bíblica adecuada a fin de que ofrezcamos una proclamación de esperanza y no de miedo que hace más daño que bien.

3. Que prosigamos con estas reflexiones sobre las diferentes ramas y vertientes de la fe cristiana, a fin de descubrir los elementos que nos unen como pueblo de Dios y hacer nuestras las palabras de nuestro Señor cuando oró: "Te pido que todos ellos estén completamente unidos, que sean una sola cosa en unión con nosotros, oh Padre, así como tú estás en mí y yo estoy en tí. Que estén completamente unidos para que el mundo crea que tú me enviaste".²⁰

Summary

The author, who was formed in the Pentecostal tradition, examines that tradition critically but with appreciation, taking into account the socio-historical milieu in which Pentecostalism has developed in Puerto Rico, and how it has responded to the various conditions facing the Puerto Rican people. Arguing that Pentecostalism is far more complex than is usually seen, the author outlines its history and development in Puerto Rico, and how it has impacted Puerto Rican life in general.

20 San Juan 17:21.

Book Review

Cuando el Tomar ya no es Gozar: Una Respuesta Católica al Alcoholismo. Kenneth Davis, OFM, Conv. Los Angeles, Franciscan Communications, 1994. 88 pp.

Allan Figueroa Deck

Father Kenneth Davis has produced a marvelously readable pastoral orientation to alcoholism suitable for Hispanic ministers "in the trenches." The fruit of several years' patient study of the reality of alcoholism in Hispanic communities, this handy booklet makes a long overdue contribution to the *pastoral resources* available in the struggle against the number one killer of Hispanics -- alcoholism.

The book reflects Father Davis' many years of *experience* in Hispanic ministry, his knowledge of the latest findings regarding this disease, and familiarity with the Twelve Step methodology of Alcoholics Anonymous. The book has several uses: First, it provides a brief but adequate and culturally adapted introduction to alcoholism for pastoral agents. Second, it provides practical suggestions on how to deal with the disease within families. Third, the booklet's layout is suitable for reflection in small faith-sharing groups.

The Spanish is simple and accessible to the ordinary person. The graphic design is pleasant and there are several illustrations calling attention to typical Hispanic situations in which alcoholism is being experienced or confronted.

The booklet is the product of Father Davis' Doctor of Ministry project at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. The project was piloted in the Diocese of Oakland under the supervision of Dr. Carmen Cervantes of the Tepeyac Institute. Dr. Margarita Melville of the University of California at Berkeley served as mentor to Father Davis in this carefully designed project.

Cuando el Tomar ya no es Gozar is an especially important and useful addition to Hispanic ministry resources. It has many practical applications. Father Davis' work provides insight and hope regarding the single most devastating health and family problem affecting Hispanic communities today. The book can be ordered by calling (800)989-3600.

Reseña Bibliográfica

Apocalipsis: Visión y Misión. Samuel Pagán. Editorial Caribe, Miami, 1993.

Pablo A. Jiménez

El estudio del libro del Apocalipsis es vital, tanto para la Iglesia hispana en particular como para la sociedad contemporánea en general. Esto es así por varias razones. En primer lugar, los medios de comunicación masiva usan la palabra "apocalíptico" como sinónimo de "terrible y espantoso", creando confusión y levantando temores en la gente. Segundo, en el mundo evangélico hispano predomina la interpretación del Apocalipsis que Pagán llama "futurista, dispensacionalista, o literalista" (pp. 38-39). Esta sostiene que las visiones del libro deben ser decodificadas para saber lo que sucederá en los últimos días de la historia humana. Los exponentes de esta escuela difieren entre sí sobre la interpretación de los diferentes símbolos. Esto abona a la confusión de nuestro pueblo. Tercero, el libro de Apocalipsis, de por sí, es difícil de entender. Esto se debe mayormente a que fue escrito en un tiempo de persecución y angustia, forzando a la Iglesia naciente a expresar su mensaje por medio de imágenes del Antiguo Testamento. Imágenes que los fieles comprendían, pero los perseguidores no ("El que tiene oídos para oír, oiga").

Apocalipsis: Visión y misión es una herramienta excelente para el estudio del libro de la Revelación. El Dr. Pagán ha escrito una presentación sencilla, clara y concisa al último libro de la Biblia. En la introducción plantea varios asuntos metodológicos de importancia y nos deja saber que el libro no sólo presentará puntos exegéticos sino que también explorará el mensaje del Apocalipsis para la Iglesia de hoy. El primer capítulo habla del desarrollo de la literatura apocalíptica y nos prepara para el segundo, que bosqueja el Apocalipsis, resume la historia de la interpretación del libro y presenta la ideología romana del culto al emperador como el problema principal que enfrentaba la comunidad cristiana en Roma. Esta parte introductoria se redondea en el tercer capítulo, que explora el lenguaje apocalíptico.

En este punto el libro cambia de tono. Una vez establecidos los puntos introductorios, los capítulos cuatro al seis exploran temas específicos, tales como la Segunda venida de Cristo (cuatro), el Juicio de Dios (cinco) y la Guerra santa y la batalla del Armagedón (seis). Como todos sabemos, la discusión de estos temas es motivo de grandes debates en el mundo evangélico. Sin embargo, Pagán sabe tratarlos con tacto, sin perder altura académica.

El capítulo final del libro se titula "Hacia un ministerio apocalíptico". En el mismo, Pagán nos llama a desenmascarar "a las instituciones e individuos que asimilan, afirman y propagan postulados y valores satánicos" (p. 89); a desarrollar un ministerio que consuele a las víctimas y proclame el juicio de Dios a los victimarios; a incorporar "valores y enseñanzas proféticas" (p. 92) en nuestro

ministerio; y a afirmar la importancia de la fidelidad a Dios. Sin duda alguna, éste es el capítulo más importante del libro.

En términos generales, el contenido del libro es excelente. Sin embargo, creo que quedaron algunos temas en el tintero. Por ejemplo, Pagán no habla sobre la controversia que se ha desarrollado en torno al "el rapto" y al "arrebataimiento de la iglesia". Cualquier Pastor sabe que --aunque la Biblia no emplea la palabra "rapto"-- la mayor parte de los miembros de nuestras iglesias entienden que esta es una doctrina bíblica y que hay grandes debates en torno al tema. Del mismo modo, Pagán sólo menciona de pasada el origen del dispensacionalismo y no explora las deficiencias de esta escuela de interpretación. Sería muy beneficioso que en un futuro cercano se trataran estos temas en un libro de este calibre.

En conclusión, el Dr. Samuel Pagán ha producido un libro muy útil tanto para el liderazgo laico de nuestras iglesias como para los pastores y las pastoras que las nutren. Del mismo modo, el libro sería un excelente texto para cursos exegéticos tanto a nivel de instituto bíblico como de seminario.

Papers Requested

Hispanic American Religion, Culture and Society. José D. Rodríguez, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615. Office: (312)753-0749, Home: (312)262-7070. Papers are invited under the theme: Key understandings and symbols in Hispanic/Latino popular religiosity. Papers are welcome that explore the symbols that provide Hispanic/Latino popular religiosity its specific world view and the cultural and religious elements that contribute to clarify this view beyond traditional Roman Catholic and Protestant expressions.

Errata

En el número 1 de Apuntes, se omitieron las referencias del artículo "Hispanic and African American Elderly: Religiosity, Religious, Participation, and Attitudes toward the Church", por David Maldonado. A continuación se ofrecen:

- * Andrews, J., *Poverty and Poverty Health Among Elderly Hispanic Americans*. Commonwealth Fund Commission on Elderly People Living Alone, 1989.
- * Carrasco, D., *Religious of Mesoamerica*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- * Koenig, H. G., *Religion, Health and Aging*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.
- * Maldonado, D.J., *A Framework for Understanding the Minority Elderly in Low-Income, Minority and Rural Adult Populations: Issues for the Future*. (ed. E.O. Schuster; Geriatric Education Center of Michigan: Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1989).
- * Senate, U.S., *Aging America: Trends and Projections*. U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1991.
- * Taylor, R.J. and L.M. Chatters, *Church-based Informal Support Among Elderly Blacks*. *The Gerontologist*, 26/6(1986):630-36.
- * Taylor, R.J. and L.M. Chatters, *Nonorganizational Religious Participation Among Elderly Black Adults*. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 46/2(1991):103-11.

